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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington D.C. 20250 (202) 447-4330

Letter No. 2500

March 22, 1991

PARNELL RESIGNS -- Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Jack Parnell is resigning, effective May 1. Tendering his resignation with "mixed emotions," Parnell said: "Now the time has come to return to the private sector to pursue many opportunities and interests that have been on hold." Parnell has been deputy since April 20, 1989. He was director of California's Department of Food and Agriculture from 1987 to 1989.

FRUIT PRICES AT RECORD HIGH -- California's late-December freeze and this season's smaller apple crop are putting upward pressure on grower & consumer prices for fresh fruit, USDA economists say. The index of grower prices & the Consumer Price Index for fresh fruit set record highs in January. Prices are expected to remain above levels of a year earlier until harvest begins for late-spring & summer fruits. Retail orange juice prices are expected to decline. **Contact: Kathryn Buckley** (202) 219-0884.

THIS IS A GOOD TIME for homeowners to test the soil of their lawns & gardens. Soil testing is a service provided by your state Cooperative Extension Service. Expect to pay about \$4 for a homeowner test; \$5 for a farm test. The real key to efficient soil testing is to take a good, representative sample. Test results are usually available in a week. **Contact: Janet Poley** (202) 447-3029.

40 YEARS OF CHANGE -- When Calvin L. Beale began a career with USDA as a rural demographer in 1953, it was a time of "extraordinary change," he says. "There was a mass exodus from farming, far beyond that seen during the farm crisis of the 1980's. The number of farms fell by 3 and 4 percent annually, and the number of people living on farms declined by nearly 750,000 per year in that decade." The major material drawbacks of rural living were overcome by electrification, modern plumbing, central heat & paved roads, Beale says. Beale reviews 40 years of change in the February issue of *Farmline*. For a copy call (202) 219-0494. **Contact: Calvin L. Beale** (202) 219-0534.

SOYBEAN QUALITY RATED -- U.S. soybeans are arriving in European & Asian ports in better condition these days, but a USDA study says we need to make further improvements. By the end of the four-year study, U.S. soybeans were reaching foreign destinations with fewer damaged kernels than at the start of the study. The study highlighted the need to increase protein content of U.S. soybeans & to decrease the amount of foreign matter in shipments. **Contact: Timothy L. Mounts** (309) 685-4011.

WORLD FOOD DAY-- Wednesday, Oct. 16 has been chosen as World Food Day for 1991. The U.S. National Committee for World Food Day will sponsor the Eighth World Food Day Teleconference from noon to 3 p.m. that day on Telstar 301 (C-Band). **Contact: Patricia Young** (202) 653-5760.

KIDS CAN HELP SAVE ENERGY, TOO -- Because children use a lot of electricity, parents should teach them some simple energy conservation measures that could become permanent habits by the time they grow up. **Debra Acosta**, with the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service, says children can help conserve energy by turning off lights when they leave a room, using daylight, dusting light bulbs and by opening & closing refrigerator doors quickly. People open refrigerators an average of 22 times every day -- that's 8,000 times a year per person. Acosta has more energy saving tips. **Contact: Debra Acosta (504) 388-4141.**

AGRICULTURE MAKING DIFFICULT ADJUSTMENTS IN GERMANY -- As many as 400,000 farmers in what used to be East Germany may lose their jobs as a result of German reunification. But the effects of reunification go beyond the reconstituted country's borders. Exports of U.S. grain could be hurt by an increase in grain production in Eastern Germany, which would tend to depress world prices. **Contact: Mary Lisa Madell (202) 219-0610.**

FAST FOOD RESTAURANTS SWITCH OILS -- Prodded by consumer concerns over saturated fats, the three largest fast food chains have completed a change from beef tallow to vegetable oils for cooking french fries. The switch should not cause major changes in the fats & oils industry -- just reshuffle it a bit. The new oil of choice for Wendy's fries is corn oil. McDonald's now uses a blend of corn & cottonseed oil for all of its fried products. Burger King switched to a soybean-cottonseed oil blend for french fries and to soybean oil for all other fried foods. **Contact: James Schaub (202) 219-0840.**

NEWS FOR PICKLE LOVERS -- For the first time in 20 years, USDA is revising pickle grading standards to accommodate changing consumer tastes & packaging preferences, says **Daniel D. Haley**, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service. Lowering salinity & acidity standards provides the mildness many shoppers now look for in high-grade, jarred, open-shelfed pickles, Haley said. The new standards also permit a bit more stem on the pickle, reflecting the industry's switch to mechanical picking. Without the stem standard change, the cost of stem shortening could make pickles cost more, Haley says. **Contact: Clarence Steinberg (202) 447-6179.**

A YEN FOR JAPANESE BUSINESS -- As the largest market for U.S. ag exports, Japan is probably the country most new-to-market exporters first encounter when doing business overseas. Knowing the cultural & business "do's and taboo's" of doing business in Japan can often make or break a sale. One tip: because the Japanese believe the preservation of harmony in social & business relationships is of paramount importance, they will go to great lengths to avoid direct confrontation with others. The April issue of **AgExporter** features Japan & also has more tips & suggestions for doing business in Japan. **Contact: Lynn Goldsborough (202) 382-9442.**

Editor: Marci Hilt Phone: (202) 447-6445

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1763 -- The current economic slump is causing some families to have to get by on less. Brenda Curtis talks with an expert on the subject. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1244 -- A new food price prediction; living on less; protecting the U.S. from Persian Gulf pests; compost piles; appliances & your energy bill. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE NEWS & FEATURES #1753 -- USDA News Highlights; a decision on the grain reserve; a dairy crisis; a study on pesticide reduction; 1991 sugar outlook. (Weekly reel of news features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1412 -- Fighting ragweed in Russia; saving the wetlands; fructose & copper; amylose & blood sugar; soybean improvements. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Wed., March 27, aquaculture outlook; world cocoa situation; Thurs., March 28, grain stocks, prospective plantings, hog & pig numbers, world tobacco situation; Fri., March 29, ag prices, wool production; Mon., April 1, horticultural exports; Tues., April 2, crop/weather update, tobacco outlook; Thurs., April 4, floriculture production. (These are the scheduled USDA. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling!)

DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINES (202) 488-8358 or 8359.

Material changed at 5 p.m., EST, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE

(Week of March 21, 23 & 25, 1991)

FEATURES -- Lynn Wyvill reports on USDA's guaranteed loan program for farmers; DeBoria Janifer on USDA research to breed Easter lilies year round; Pat O'Leary on a recent USDA science day for students.

ACTUALITIES -- Secretary of Agriculture Edward Madigan -- excerpts from USDA National Ag Day ceremony and from March 22 USDA Radio News Conference; Ray Motha, USDA meteorologist, with a crop & weather update; USDA Economist Greg Gajewski with the latest ag outlook; USDA Economist Kate Buckley on U.S. fruit & nut production; USDA Economist Jerry Stamm on farm credit; USDA Economist Steve McDonald on farm trade.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- Pat O'Leary reports on the U.S. rice industry; Lynn Wyvill on home-based business opportunities in rural America; DeBoria Janifer on USDA's Women, Infants & Children program.

EVERY OTHER WEEK -- Ag Update, five minutes of USDA farm program information, presented in news desk format with B-roll footage.

Available on Satellite Westar IV, Transponder 12D (Channel 23), audio 6.2 or 6.8:

THURSDAY 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EST
SATURDAY 10 - 10:45 a.m., EST
MONDAY 8 - 8:45 a.m., EST

OFFMIKE

AG DAY BREAKFAST...was delayed for two days because of a snow storm, says Al Heinz (KGLO, Mason City, Iowa). Al served as master of ceremonies at the well-attended event. Al says he expects few planting changes in his area as a result of Farm Bill flexibility. Recent snow and winter rains have provided ample subsoil moisture.

INFORMATIONAL EFFORT...by 73 members of the Ohio Farm Bureau to their representatives in Congress was covered by Valerie Parks (ABN, Radio/TV Columbus, Ohio). Valerie says the annual three-day trip this year focused on wetlands, Farm Bill provisions, budget & taxes. She also stopped by to say "Hi" to us while she was in Washington.

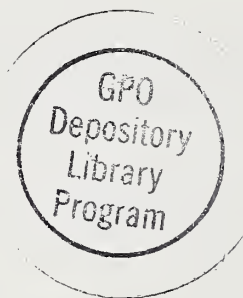
MARK YOUR CALENDAR...for the NAFB meeting in your region: **South Central**, El Dorado, Kan., May 3-5; **Northeast**, Burlington, Vt., June 7-9; **Southeast**, St. Petersburg, Fla., June 13-16; **North Central**, St. Cloud, Minn., June 27-29; **Western**, Vail, Colo., July 7-10.

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MOVED...Larry Frum to WGAL-TV, Lancaster, Penn., as farm report producer, from Channel 13 in Huntington, W.Va. Peggy Fish to WFMB/WCVS, Springfield, Ill., from WTAX, Springfield.

SUPPLIES AND LINE CREWS...came from as far away as New York to repair electric power lines downed by an ice storm in northeastern Illinois, says Marla Behrends (WKAN, Kankakee). Schools were closed, some farms had no electricity for more than a week & many producers copied market figures wearing gloves.

DEEP FREEZE...of December may have killed half the winter wheat in the area served by Verne Sheppard (KTOQ, Rapid City, S.D.). He says lack of moisture is stressing surviving plants.


VIC POWELL
Chief, Radio & TV Division